



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **Level 1 Drought Declared in 24 Western and Central Kentucky Central Counties** *Agricultural hardest hit by lack of rainfall*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 25, 2012)** – The Office of the State Climatologist and the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet, in coordination with the Kentucky Drought Mitigation Team, are issuing a Level I drought declaration for three drought management areas (DMAs) in western Kentucky.

A Level I drought indicates moderate to severe drought conditions have developed primarily affecting soil moisture and vegetative health. Serious impacts to agricultural water needs, wildfire risk and other water-sensitive sectors can be expected in the designated areas.

#### **Counties included in the Level I drought declaration:**

**Purchase DMA:** Ballard, Calloway, Carlisle, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, Marshall

**Pennyrite DMA:** Caldwell, Christian, Crittenden, Hopkins, Livingston, Lyon, Muhlenberg, Todd, Trigg

**Green River DMA:** Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union, Webster

These counties are experiencing widespread dryness with precipitation levels of only 30 to 60 percent of normal for the past three months.

The drought conditions are affecting agriculture in the declared areas, where pastures are browning out, hayfield yields are low, corn and soybeans have

germinated slowly and livestock ponds are below normal levels for this time of year.

Hydrologic problems are also developing in the drought areas. Most notably, flows in the Tradewater River Basin at the U.S. Geological Survey gage at Olney have reached record lows for this time of year. Also, Rough River Lake, Nolin River Lake and Barren River Lake are 3 to 7 feet below summer pool stage. While these low lake levels are not likely to impact drinking water supplies obtained directly from the lakes, minimal dam releases during the summer could affect downstream water supplies as well as recreational activities on the lakes.

At this time, the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center is indeterminate about summer drought conditions, said Chip Zimmer, environmental technologist at the Kentucky Division of Water.

"Short-term forecasts for the western Kentucky region call for dry weather and record heat," said Zimmer. "The National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center is indeterminate about longer term summer drought conditions," said Zimmer.

The Kentucky Drought Mitigation and Response Plan defines a tiered approach to classifying drought severity using multiple indicators to assess the intensity and location of developing drought. These indicators include the Drought Monitor, Palmer Drought Index, Crop Moisture Index, and precipitation and streamflow measurements.

More information about drought declaration criteria can be found in the Kentucky Drought Mitigation and Response Plan at [http://water.ky.gov/wa/Documents/State%20Plan\\_Final.pdf](http://water.ky.gov/wa/Documents/State%20Plan_Final.pdf).

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